



Facts About...

FORMER POWHATAN MINING COMPANY SITE

Site Location:

This approximately 5.5-acre site, located at 6721 Windsor Mill Road in Gwynn Oak, Baltimore County, Maryland, originally consisted of two separate parcels (Parcels 269 and 304). The former asbestos mineral ore processing plant, a residential building, and an unpaved parking area are located on Parcel 269. A church and several recently subdivided properties intended for residential development are located on Parcel 304. Both parcels are now surrounded on all sides by residential properties. The entire site has been zoned residential but previously was zoned for industrial land use.

Site History:

The Powhatan Mining Company, an asbestos processing plant, was constructed in 1917 by Frederick A. Mett to produce high quality asbestos fibers for filters and other industrial uses. In the late 1960s, his daughter, Frances E. Mett, assumed control of the company, which continued operation until the company declared bankruptcy in 1984. Mrs. Mett died in 1988. As a result of the bankruptcy, the court assigned Thomas Renner to serve as the trustee for the company's assets.

Parcel 269 was sold by Renner to David and Lucille Hilnbrand in June 1985 for \$500. In July 1989, the Hilnbrands were issued a Corrective Order #89-07-01 by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) regarding the unlicensed removal of asbestos from pipes and/or from equipment or machines at the site. Based on a 1992 agreement with MDE, the Hilnbrands were allowed to use the front portion of the plant for their vehicle repair business as long as they sealed and maintained the rest of the former plant. The property was later sold to the Hilnbrand's son, Frederick Hilnbrand, in a not at arms length transaction. Frederick remains the owner today and resides in a small residence adjacent to the plant.

Parcel 304 was sold by the Estate of Frances E. Mett to Randall Gordon in April 1994. In August 2001, Mr. Gordon sold the parcel to Emmanuel Ministries International, Inc. to construct a new church. Between 2005 and June 2006, a new church was constructed and a portion of the property was subdivided and sold to Portrait Development LLC for the construction of a 12 home subdivision designated as Valerie Manor.

Environmental Investigations and Actions:

In April 1971, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DHMH) Environmental Health Services unit conducted a site inspection of the Powhatan Mining Company's operations and observed numerous issues associated with visible dust generated by plant operations. In 1977, DHMH documented results of asbestos in air samples collected from areas surrounding the plant building. In March 1978, an internal DHMH memorandum stated that appropriate measures were needed to reduce asbestos levels around the plant. No documentation was located to determine what actions were taken. However, the business continued to decline and the owner declared bankruptcy in 1984.

In November 2008, MDE's Site Assessment Section began preparing a list of sites where asbestos contamination from mining and/or processing activities may exist in Maryland to request funding



by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as part of the Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation (PA/SI) grant. Before the draft list was finalized, MDE contacted the EPA project manager to determine whether this site would be an acceptable candidate. The EPA project manager contacted an EPA Region 3 On-Scene Coordinator regarding the site. The EPA OSC visited the site on November 28, 2008 for a visual inspection of the site.

In April and June 2009, MDE's Remedial Management Services contractor, Chesapeake Geosciences, Inc. collected grab samples of dust piles from inside the facility, soil samples from test pits and surface areas adjacent to the facility and subcontracted a structural assessment of the exterior of the deteriorated facility. Results of the sampling identified elevated levels of asbestos remaining in the building and in the surrounding soils. The structural assessment found the building in fair condition but identified some areas in need of repair. Additional bulk and air samples collected by EPA identified asbestos fibers inside the structure and in the surrounding soil. In April of 2009 MDE requested EPA conduct a removal assessment at the site.

Current Status:

EPA is planning to collect soil and air samples from the residential properties adjacent to the facility as well the facility itself in order to determine the next course of action.

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